

**Friday, May 24, 2024 • Read Numbers 11**

Questions from the Scripture text: What did the people do in v1? What did the Lord think of this? How did He respond? With what effect? To whom did the people cry (v2)? What did Moses do? With what effect? What did Moses call the place (v3)? Why? Who did what in v4a? Who else wept (v4b)? Saying what? What do they “remember” (v5)? What do they compare, negatively, to these “memories” (v6)? What did the manna look like (v7)? How did the people use it (v8)? What did it taste like? How easily was it obtained (v9)? What did Moses hear in v10? Who was doing it? Where? Whose anger was aroused? Who else was displeased? To Whom does Moses take his displeasure (v11)? What two questions does he ask? What does he say that the Lord has done to him? With what two questions does v12 begin? How does he describe the task that God has assigned to him? What does he ask in v13? Why does he want to give them meat? What does he say that he is unable to do (v14)? What does he ask God to do (v15)? According to what from God? In order not to let him see what? Who speaks to whom in v16? What/whom does he say to gather? To where? To do what? What will the Lord do there (v17)? Why? Then to whom must Moses speak (v18)? What is he to tell them to do? What will they do the next day? What have they done in Whose hearing? How will the Lord respond? For how long (v19–20)? Until what happens to them? How does Moses respond in v21–22? But how does YHWH reply to Moses in v23? What does Moses do in v24? And what does YHWH do (v25)? To what effect? Who else prophesy (v26)? Despite what? Who responds in what way (v27)? Prompting whom else to say what to Moses (v28)? How does Moses answer (v29)? Then who do what in v30? What happens in v31? How “deep” (!) are the quail? What do the people do (v32)? But what happens in v33? What does Moses call the place in v34? Then to where does the cloud lead them (v35)?

**What is Israel like, as God’s chosen people?** Numbers 11 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord’s Day. In these thirty-five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **Israel, God’s chosen people, are wrath-deserving sinners like Egypt and the rest of the world.**

The first couple “days” worth of travel ends up taking over a month! But in that day, we learn that while Moses wishes all the people had God’s Spirit as he did, the fact of their spiritual condition is that they are much more like Egypt and the world than Moses.

**It burns**, v1–3. Because the incident with the meat gets more “press,” we may overlook that it’s not the first wickedness that the Lord punishes, after Israel departs Sinai. The very first thing they do is complain (v1)! Have you ever overheard someone complain about you? The Lord hears all our complaining against Him. A thankless, grumbling spirit is exactly the opposite of glorifying Him as God and giving Him thanks (cf. Rom 1:21). So the fire of YHWH comes out and burns the outskirts of the camp, the place where the ceremonially unclean were. The people had forgotten that the ceremonially unclean reminded them that all sinners are defiled. So their first pit stop is called “it burns.”

**Graves of craving**, v4–35. The name of stop number two (v35) comes from when the mixed multitude “craved a craving” in v4. But it’s not just these others who have come with them, the children of Israel immediately join in, and with weeping. Not only is their memory of the menu unlikely in v5, but their memory of the price “free” is patently false. The opening scenes of Exodus saw them weeping over their bondage, which was the incalculable price of their food. The Spirit juxtapositions their complaining against the manna (v6) to a reminder of its heavenliness (v7), usefulness (v8), and free (actually!) provision (v9).

We must watch against joining others in their grumbling. The mixed multitude was doing it, and “throughout their families” (v7), all Israel was doing it. But YHWH was “greatly provoked.” He is not sympathetic to our sin because of how “normal” it is, and it is deadly folly that we tend to be sympathetic to our own sin on that account. Rather, we should be like Moses—displeased with a sin, even if the whole world seems to approve of it.

Knowing the Lord’s fury against the people, Moses cries out to God for help. He knows that he needs more grace (“favor”; v11, 15), and that he is as helpless as a male (“guardian” in v12 is masculine) who must now “nurse” child with meat (v13). This is, of course, metaphorical. He knows that the people’s great need is not meat. But he himself is unable to lead them in following the Lord. This is why the Lord’s great answer to Moses is not the quail (the quail is a judgment upon the nation, v20) but the 70 elders. They will have a portion of the Spirit for leadership (v17), but as we go through the book of Numbers, it will appear that the people need more than just leadership. The 70 who were at the tabernacle (v24) never prophesied again (v25), and Moses wished that they had all been (v29) like Eldad and Medad, who were elders and officers but had not been among the 70 (v26). It is not enough to have qualified men in positions; they must continue to operate by the Spirit.

Ultimately, the people had wished for the Egypt-treatment (and of v20), and they got it. The provision of quail became a very great plague (end of v33) just before it was exhausted (“chewed” in NKJ of v33; cf. Ps 78:29–31). He dropped the quail upon them, three feet deep (v31), and they spread it out and gorged themselves for a month (v32). But all that they accomplished was demonstrating that they were of the same wicked character as Egypt, deserving the same acts of judgment with which the Lord had struck Egypt. What even Moses did not think possible (v21–22), YHWH easily did (v23). The Lord’s arm is never shortened; if we come to Him with unbelief that His arm is strong to save us, we will find instead that His arm is strong to chasten us!

Two stops, two days’ worth of travel. And the names of the stops (“it burns” and “graves of craving”) should alarm us. May the Lord drive us to Himself for grace. Membership in His church does not, of itself, produce in us the holy difference from the world that it demands from us.

What are you tempted to grumble or complain about in your life? What is there that you are tempted to think would make your life better if you could just have more of it or better of it? How is such thinking similar to that of the mixed multitude and the children of Israel in this chapter? What do you need, if you are going to be more contented?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how easily we complain and grumble. Apart from Your grace, we are like Israel—and therefore like the mixed multitude and like the Egyptians, we easily crave a craving. Grant to us from Your Spirit, so that we would be greatly displeased with our sin. Give us grace to be content with Your great goodness to us in Christ, we ask through His Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH68A “God Shall Arise, and by His Might”**

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Numbers 11. These are God’s words. Now, when the people complained, it displeased, Yahweh for Yahweh heard it and his anger was roused. So the fire of Yahweh burned among them. And consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses and when Moses prayed to Yahweh, the fire was quenched.

So, we called the name of the place tabera. Because the fire of Yahey had burned among them. Now, the mixed multitude who are among them yielded to intense craving. So the children of Israel also wept, again and said, Who will give us meat to eat. We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons the leeks, the onions, and the garlic, But now, our whole being has dried up.

There is nothing at all. Accept this matter before our eyes. Now, the Mana was like coriander seed, in its color like the color of bedallion. The people went about and gathered it grounded on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans and made cakes of it.

And its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. And when the Dew fell on the camp in the night, the Manna fell on it. Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families. Everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of Yahweh was greatly aroused.

Moses also was displeased. So Moses said to Yahweh. Why have you Afflicted your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight? That you have laid the burden of all these people on me. Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them that you should say to me, carry them in, your bosom, as a guardian carries, a nursing child to the land, which you swore to, their fathers, Where am I to get meat to give to all these people?

For they weep all over me saying. Give us meat that we may eat. I'm not able to Bear all these people alone. Because the burden is too heavy for me. If you treat me like this, please kill me Here. And Now, if I have found favor in your sight and do not, let me see my wretchedness.

So you always said to Moses, gather to me, 70 men of the Elders of Israel, Whom, you know, to be Elder, Elders of the people and officers over them. Bring them to the Tabernacle of meeting. That they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there.

I will take of the spirit that is upon you and I will put the same upon them. And they shall bear the burden of the people with you. That you may not bear, it yourself alone, Then you shall say to the people consecrate yourselves for tomorrow and you shall eat meat.

For you have wept in the hearing of Yahweh saying who will give us meat to eat for it was well with us in Egypt. Therefore, Yahweh will give you meat. And you shall eat. You shall eat not one day. Nor two days nor five days, nor 10 days, nor 20 days.

But for a whole month, Until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you. Because you have despised Yahweh. Who is among you. And have wept before him saying, Why did we ever come up out of Egypt? And Moses said, The people whom I am among are six hundred thousand men on foot yet.

You have said, I will give them meat that they may eat for a whole month. Shufflocks and herds be slaughtered for them to provide enough for them or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to provide enough for them. And you always said to Moses, Has yahweh's arm been shortened?

Now, you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not. So, Moses went out and told the people the words of Yahweh And he gathered 70 men of the Elders of Israel. And placed them around the Tabernacle. Then Yahweh came down in the cloud and spoke to him.

And took of the spirit that was upon him and placed the same upon the Seventy Elders. And it happened when the spirit rested upon them that they prophesied. Although, they never did so again, but two men had remained in the camp. The name of one was aldad and the name of the other was me, dad.

And the spirit rested upon them. Now, they were among those listed but had not gone out to the Tabernacle. Yet, they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses and said El, Dad and me dad are prophesying in the camp. So Joshua, the son of nun.

Moses assistant one of his choice, men answered and said Moses, my Lord forbid them Then Moses said to him. Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all your face. People were prophets and that Yahweh would put his Spirit upon them. When Moses returned to the camp, he And the elders.

Of Israel. Now, our wind went out from Yahweh. And it brought Quail from the sea and left them. Fluttering near the camp about a Day's Journey on this side and about a day's Journey. On the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits above the surface of the ground.

And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day and gathered the quail. He who gathered the least? Gathered, ten homers And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth, but before it was chewed, the wrath of Yahweh was aroused against the people.

El Yahoo has struck the people with a very great plague. So, he called the name of that place. Because there they buried, the the people. Who had yielded to craving? From kibratha to Ava, the people moved to hazaroth. And camped. Atazaroth. Amen, that This reading of gods inspired and Inherent word.

Last week, when it described how the that people would move and it described the The order by which they would March, and to described the leadership that the Lord had given them. And, and it described, especially the Lord's presence in the midst of them, with the Tabernacle structure and the holy things.

And the place that they go and they had this wonderful conclusion in chapter 10 with when they were going out, it was rise up oyave and let your enemies be scattered. And when they were coming to rest return oyave, to the many thousands of Israel. Well, that's what it looks like from the perspective of the Lord's provision and the Lord's faithfulness.

But the people do not respond to the Lord. Like the Holy Spirit has given to us to know that we ought to respond. To. To Numbers Chapter 10, like We've been hearing for the last couple of weeks. When we look at the people when we shift, Our view of the scene from the Lord to Israel.

what we find is unfaithfulness and grumbling and complaining. And this is, especially highlighted by the names of the first two stops. Along this three-day Journey, you remember in chapter 10 and described the three-day Journey to the Wilderness of Quran. And you might have thought if we ended out Numbers Chapter 10, that they would take three days to take the three-day Journey, but here already in the first two days, we're spending an entire month.

Eating Quail until it comes out of their nostrils. And that's where without counting however, many days, they spent at the first place. And the names of the two places as they're going along through the Wilderness and naming the places that they stop. The first one gets named, it burns.

And the second one gets named Graves of craving.

If you were writing a story, And, the story came with a map and you were describing the jour. The the people in the story were on, it would tell you a lot about The journey and how things are going. If the name of the first stop, is it burns?

And the name of the second stop is Graves of graving. And the worst part of it all. Is that it was because they were despising Yahweh. They're retreating the Lord himself as small. And undesirable. The very first thing that we see, it doesn't even talk about. I'm done leaving.

They departed on the Journey of three days in chapter 10 verse 33. But the very first thing that we have, after the summary of what Moses used to say, when the cloud would leave or when the cloud would stop, the very first thing. Now, the people complained and it displeased Yahweh, You could summarize their whole life.

As a life of complaining. Now, did they have hardships while they were in the wilderness? The Lord was. Providing for them. The Lord was protecting them. The Lord was giving them his presence. We don't even know what they're complaining about. It could be food. It could be water. It could be lonely.

They could be. one another, I mean there's 600 000 men, afoot at least two million Israelites. There's lots of possible causes for complaining among them. But the point is the people complained. And it displeased Yahweh for Yahweh heard it. You and I should remember that. If we could see somehow, A manifestation of the Lord in front of us.

If the Lord Jesus was physically. Present with us. How we would fear to Grumble and complain. Or how we ought to. And yet, the Lord does hear. And we are before him. And are complaining. Displeases him. So, when the people had complained, when the people complained, it displeased Yahweh for he heard it and you notice where he strikes with the fire.

He strikes with the fire at the outskirts of the camp in the place where the unclean people were. When you get what he's saying. He's? Yes, there's such a thing as ceremonial uncleanness that he's given in the law. But it's because the ceremonial uncleanness is a reminder to us.

Of our sinful. Uncleanness. And if you are going to be in the presence of the Lord, you must be cleansed. And so if there are going to be ceremonially in the presence of the Lord, they had to be ceremonially clean. But we are actually really in the presence of the Lord all the time.

And so we need to be actually and really Clean. Of our sin. And so we must watch against unrepentance here. Among the very people whom the Lord himself. Had redeemed his fire breaks out. So Name of the first place. Is it burns? They all deserve. what NATO been about who got And the Lord.

Burns. The outskirts. To remind them of that. That by those who draw near to him. He must be regarded as holy. Well, the next place like they come to stop number two. And it ends up being called graves of craving. Now, we must be, we must be careful. Because even among God's people, There are going to be those.

Who. And give in. To fleshly desire. And this actually starts in the mixed multitude. If you look at verse 4, Those that mixed multitude who came up. came up out of Egypt with Israel that we heard about Exodus chapter 12. Some of him we assume because the Lord had given Instructions specifically for how to do that.

Some of whom had even. convert it become circumcised with their households so that they could celebrate the Passover with Jewish households. With Israelite households. But it's among the mixed multitude that it begins. And then it says, so the children of Israel also wept again. And said, who will give us meat to eat?

So, be careful. That other people's anxiety, other people's ingratitude does not become an occasion for your own. In fact, grumbling and complaining still today goes viral, doesn't it? You don't actually need social media for sin to go viral. They didn't have social media in the camp of Israel. But it starts with the mixed multitude and then the children of Israel verse 4, And what they're saying?

in verses five and six and then Moses is going through. And Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families. Everyone at the door of his tent. This weeping and complaining went viral and it wasn't even factual. Who will give us meat to eat. We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, Well, we don't know whether or not they had fish.

Maybe they, they had fish. But it certainly wasn't free of charge. They were the price For the fish. Now God, Has made a land, pay the price for them. And God is actually giving them the Manna for free. The Manna that falls down from heaven with the Dew every night.

And tastes like a pastry mixed with oil and can be prepared multiple different ways. And they say the, we the fish, we ate freely, the cucumbers, the melons the leeks, the onions, and the garlic, But now, our whole being is dried up and there is nothing. At all. Except this supernaturally provided delicious?

stuff that we don't even have to really work for. We just gather it, it's literally on the surface of the ground. There's no planting or reaping or what do you call it when you When you sift, there's no sifting. it's all already ready to use.

You just grind it and bake it. And they are not, of course, despising the Manna. It's not just despising the Manna, it's despising, the Lord. It's We would rather have. Bondage. And Egypt. With this other food. Then we would rather ha then have Manna and the Lord. When truly, if we had to starve to death in order to have the Lord, we ought rather to have the Lord in nothing.

And let us starve and let us die and pass from this life and belong to the Lord forever. And whatever we can have when we have him. We ought to enjoy on account of it being something that we have with him. And however, good it is. Then we should enjoy every part of its goodness.

Every part of his provision of it. Every part of it's being good for us, every part of its enjoyability. And the fellowship. You know how we say let's eat together and don't eat too quickly and take time when you eat and lift your face up from your plate and look around and enjoy the people because we're not beasts.

Beasts eat just to be fed humans have been given by God to eat as a way of having Fellowship, but we don't just have fellowship with one another We have fellowship with God. We receive our daily bread from him. Isn't Jesus teaching us when he teaches us to pray that way.

That we would enjoy our whatever food we have from him from from the Lord together, the way that the Israelites enjoyed Manna in the wilderness. They literally received that day's bread every day, and if they tried to keep more of it, it would rot unless it was Lord's Day Eve in which case it would miraculously last for two days so that they could have table Fellowship on the Lord's Day without even having the Gathering part.

That day. Or on the Sabbath rather, it wasn't the Lord's Day yet. And so we should enjoy. The good that God has given us. And even if it's not as delicious, or even, not as nutritious, or even not as plentiful. As. we might in his Pro. We might have benefited from in some way.

If in his Providence we have less At least we have him. And that we can never lose even if we actually did have our whole being dry up. And have nothing at all. If we had God, We still have everything. But he teaches us to look to him for food and for clothing, and he teaches us in his word.

If we have food and clothing with these, let us be content. Let us be rich towards God. Well. This is. This is very discouraging to Moses. And his response is not sinless, the Lord. Instructs him and teaches him. Moses complains that they are weeping. In his ears. but the Lord in verse 20 says, it says to them and this is he gives Moses to say, then you have despised Yahweh who is among you and have wept before him.

Saying, why did we ever come up out of Egypt? And it's not Moses who's carrying the people, and the Lord, reminds Moses of this in a very gentle way. By making the promise of the quail or the promise of the meat, he doesn't know yet that it's quail. He makes the promise of the meat and Moses thinks.

I we don't have enough. Livestock, we're gonna start slaughtering meat, if I have to feed them meat for 30 days, we're going to run out of the animals and we're going to start having to gather, whatever fish can be found in the sea. But it's the Lord who's going to feed them.

The meat, not Moses. Moses's. Arm is short. That's the point verse 23. He always said to Moses has Yahweh's arm been shortened. Now, you shall see whether what I say will happen to you. Or not. But notice that God does not rebuke Moses for initially. Moses is crying out to the Lord, he's humbled before him.

He freely admits in verse 12 that it wasn't his power. That brought these people about And he feels himself, unable. To continue leading them. Now, in fact, there's a turn of phrase that Doesn't very quickly or easily. Appear or occur to us in in the English where he uses the word, Guardian?

Which is the male caregiver. for a child. but then the nursing child, the, the word, related to nursing is there And he's saying, I don't have. I'm not a woman who can carry them upon my chest and feed them milk. And it's not milk that they want, it's meat.

And so he, he draws a word picture saying, I cannot like nurse these people meet from my body. the people of Israel. Who have been brought by the Lord? An entrusted. To Moses's care. Are impossible to take care of. Now, this is actually true in all Ministry. This is true in parenting.

This is true in the whole Christian Life, it is impossible to do. What we have been called to do. And Moses. Moses recognizes that. to some extent when he's he says, did I conceive all these people? He's basically saying that God needs. to be the one. Who solves the problem.

But the Lord. Indicates basically to Moses that what is needed, is not more men so much. But for the spirit's work and the men, but the spirit is Sovereign And we must trust what God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit with the Triune God. does we must submit?

We must submit to what? Uses our ministry to do in our families. We must submit to what he uses or Ministry to do in the church because ultimately and when you're a dad or when you're a mom, it's not going to be you. Who produces the effect in the children?

It's going to be the Holy. And it's not the Elders or the minister of the church. Who produces the effect in the church. It's God, the Holy One of the things that one of the ways that the Lord brings us out, is he says he's going to take a portion of the holy spirit.

That is on Moses and give Give that portion. these 70 other Elders, divide up what he takes from Moses and give it to them. And Moses is actually going to in the way it's described he's going to end up with less. And these seventy Elders, they only prophesy the one time.

They never prophesy again. The only two people who ever prophesy in the camp aren't even from the 70. They're Elders of the people who are on the list but they don't number among the 70 that Moses brings out to the Tabernacle So, So, the Lord does make this Provision but he he gives the provision.

In a way that shows that. For the people to stop craving. And stop complaining. And be Godly. it takes not the work of a man, not the work of 70 men, not the work of 70,000 men. If he had them That takes the work of God. The Holy And so Moses was already humbled to some extent, admitting his weakness admitting That his neediness asking for help.

Even even admitting that if he does it. By himself, he is going to die. or he was going to Be brought to a wretchedness that would be worse than death and asking if he could die instead. But the Actually helps his servant by bringing him lower. By making him to understand.

That he is actually weaker than he knows. And it's actually more impossible than he thinks. But, In God, the Holy Spirit, he already has Everything he needs. For what he's been called to do. And what the Lord does with them, is up to the Lord. This entire first congregation that comes out of Egypt.

The adults. Of this. Entire first congregation this entire first generation, they're all going to perish in the wilderness. Moses doesn't know this yet. But God, the holy spirit is free. He doesn't owe anyone to be converted. He moves wherever he will. And to whatever extent he will. He is God and we are not and we must submit to him.

And we must serve despite our discouragements. Because we never know when he will come in great power. It doesn't belong to us. To produce. one or the other. Effect. It belongs to him. And so, in dependence and humility. let us not be discouraged. Well, the Lord does send the quail.

And, it's still in their teeth. They're still chewing it. Implication is. That even though they're eating it for 30 days until it comes out of their nostrils, they are determined to indulge themselves. And the way it's worded in verse 33, I don't think means immediately. The first time they bite in Because God does make a big deal about the exact length of time.

That he will give them to each Quail. And, He did make it three feet deep for two days, Journey. In every direction from the camp, but not on the camp itself. And they. And they all went out and collected, and probably cleaned and dried the meat.

I think I forgot to put in the devotional. How much 10 homers is? But it's a huge amount. Of meat. Which you can imagine two days Journey's worth. So 40 miles worth of three foot deep Quail. in every direction from the camp. And they don't even.

they don't, they don't come to repentance. You would think that the day that the quail blew in There would be humiliated before God we have sinned, we have despised the Lord. We should not have desired to go back to Egypt. But they did desire to go back to Egypt.

And God does give them the Egypt treatment. Because before all of the quail is chewed up before the quail Runs Out. verse 33 says, He always struck the people with a very Plague. And what does that remind you of? Well. That's what he did in Egypt. To the Egyptians.

And so we must never. Be like asaph in the front half. Of Psalm 73. Envy, the wicked. Because of what they have in material things. For they do not have Yahweh. They are under his curse. And that was really what they coveted. They coveted being back in the place.

That was under his curse. And so he plagued them. He gave them the Egypt treatment and stopped number two. Got the name, Graves of craving. And, you know, verse 34, describes, the name of the place in verse 35 starts using the new map. From Graves of craving the people moved to hazaroth and camped Azeroth.

They put their name on the map. And not in a good way. But in a way that warns us, That if we have the Lord, We have all of the provision that we need. And Lucky taught Moses. If we have the Lord We have all the power. That we need.

Only let us submit to his Sovereign will And what he does with it. And serve him by his grace. As Faithfully as he enables us to. And not be discouraged. Even if the effects are quite Grievous. There's a difference between being grieved And being discouraged. The Lord grant that, his Spirit would write these truths.

On our hearts to pray. Father, thank you for This passage. Thank you for. How Vivid it is. in many ways. Pray that you your spirit would write its truth on our hearts. That we would be content to have you, and we would never Grumble or complain. About the provision that we have so long as we have you with it.

And we pray that you would make us confident. To have you your spirit, your son. His resurrection life in. And that we would never be discouraged. Help us Lord to trust you with Grievous results. This is one of the most difficult things. In our life. With ourselves or administering to others, or And considering your church.

but make us like the wind contented child. Of Psalm 131. That we would submit meekly to whatever you are pleased to do. Even as we grieve over. What is Grievous? Even as we cry out to you. To come in power and give Revival. Help us by your spirit how we thank you.

So, here's your spirit and the spirit of your son. Whom you have sent into our hearts, because we are children. By whom we call you father, in the name of your son. Our Lord Jesus. Amen.